

Hunt Tower
Pennsylvania Railroad
Fifth and Allegheny streets
Huntingdon
Huntingdon County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-245

HAER
PA,
31- HUDO,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HUNT TOWER

HAER
PA
31- HUDD,
2 -

HAER No. PA-245

Location: Fourth, Fifth and Allegheny streets, Huntingdon, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: 1900

Builder: Pennsylvania Railroad and the H&BT

Present Owner: Huntingdon Revitalization & Development

Present Use: Restored for adaptive use

Significance: After a flood in 1889 destroyed the partially abandoned Juniata Division of the canal, the railroads relocated the tracks to the canal right-of-way in congested areas. This relocation of the tracks was responsible for construction of the new switch tower.

Project Information: In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HAER undertook a comprehensive inventory of Blair and Cambria counties as the first step in identifying the region's surviving historic engineering works and industrial resources.

The results of this project have been published in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites, (1991), by Nancy Shedd, Sarah Heald, editor and published by HABS/HAER for the National Park Service.

Compiler: Nancy Shedd and Ken Heineman, Historians
Gray Fitzsimons and Kenneth Rose, Editors

History:

HISTORY: The Union Depot was built in 1872 to serve the PRR and the H&BT, which both had used existing buildings as passenger stations. At the time, the PRR tracks were located on Allegheny Street, the H&BT tracks began west of the new depot, and the Pennsylvania Canal passed south of the station, on the present railroad right-of-way. Orientation of the station was toward Allegheny Street, where a roof, supported by iron columns, extended over the sidewalk to shelter passengers and a conical-roofed, second-story tower projected from the northeast corner of the building. These Allegheny Street projections were removed when the station was reoriented southward in 1892.

After the flood of 1889 destroyed the partially abandoned Juniata Division of the canal, the PRR relocated its tracks to the canal right-of-way in many congested areas. In Huntingdon, the tracks were removed from their hazardous location in the middle of a busy street and relaid on the canal bed. This move necessitated relocation of the H&BT tracks as well, to an area on the north bank of the river. Passenger access shifted to the south side of the depot, and broad-roofed shelters were constructed over the new east and westbound platforms. About 1905, a small, enclosed eastbound depot was built under the existing roofed area, and a 25' addition was made to the west end of the main depot. Relocation of the tracks also was responsible for construction about 1900 of the HUNT switch tower, just north of the tracks at the extreme west end of the platform area.

The Penn Central closed the Huntingdon Depot in 1965, and automation led Conrail to abandon the HUNT tower in 1985. The eastbound shelter remained in use for a number of years as a waiting room for passengers boarding both eastbound and westbound trains. This shelter is no longer in use. The switch tower was saved from demolition by Huntingdon Revitalization & Development, the town's Main Street organization, and is being restored for adaptive use. The interior of the deteriorating depot is threatened by a leaking roof.

Sources:

Photograph Collection, Huntingdon County Historical Society, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

Sanborn Map Company. Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1891, 1896, 1901, 1906.

Shedd, Nancy S. An Architectural Study of the Ancient Borough of Huntingdon. Huntingdon: John S. Rodgers Company, 1976.